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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[20 May 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Human Rights Violations of Syrian Children

Violations of the human rights of children in the Syrian Arab Republic

Submitted to: thirty-eight sessions of the Human Rights Council.

Submitted by: Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association. (in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations).

Date: May 2018.

Regarded On Item 4: Summary report of the high-level panel discussion on violations of the human rights of children in the Syrian Arab Republic, held at the thirty-seventh session (Human Rights Council resolution 36/20)

Preface

Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association (Egypt) is progressing with this report on clarifying and monitoring violations of the human rights of children in the Syrian Arab Republic, in accordance with the fourth item, on human rights situations that require the Council's attention.

In this regard, we will review the violations committed by the armed groups, the Syrian government and the forces loyal to them in flagrant of the rights of Syrian children, as well as violations of the rights of the Child by Turkey during its military interventions in Syria, and we will address the negative interventions made by The international coalition and its impact on the children of Syria, and finally the recommendations made by us to the Council.

Violations against children by armed groups in Syria

According to UNICEF statistics, as well as the testimonies of a number of local organizations and local activists, in 2017 there was considerable suffering for children by the practices of armed groups supported by regional forces, where the phenomenon of the recruitment and use of children in military operations has proliferated, 300 children were employed and recruited at 12 years of age, 851 cases were investigated by armed groups, and at least 37 children were killed and other 27 children were injured, the Free Syrian Army faction and Islamic groups are the most vulnerable groups to have carried out these inhuman practices, and children have been denied because of their alleged relation with armed groups, some as many as 10 years old, seven have been executed, and 17 children have been missing since early 2017.

There is ample evidence that the armed groups that controlled the Raqqa area used children as human shields, killing dozens of children and use of the rest as hostages in the face of the regular forces, which has caused constant maiming, wounds and suffering to thousands of children, as well as injuries. As a result of the firing of mortar shells and rocket attacks by armed groups, and those violations made more than 40,000 children trapped in the line of fire in the city of Raqqa, and the fighting led to the displacement of about 80,000 children.

Violations carried out by the Syrian government and its loyal forces

The Turkish army launched hundreds of attacks on the Syrian town of Afrin, killing around 35 children and injuring 100 others, causing these indiscriminate attacks have deprived children of health and education services, and many schools and public parks have been targeted, resulting in the killing of children, and the Turkish army has also committed atrocities against some families.

According to Human Rights Watch, the Turkish armed forces also carried out three attacks in northwest Syria in late January 2018, which killed 17 children, and 4 munitions were thrown into an air raid on a group of tents, killing five children, and since the beginning of 2017, Turkish security forces oppose asylum-seekers on daily basis, throw fire at them, causing the death of five children and injuring 18 others, as well as the inhumane treatment to which they and their relatives are subjected during their asylum applications.

Negative impact of international alliance interventions on children in Syria

The United States-led international coalition has been negatively involved in the Syrian matter, according to the Syrian Human Rights Network and other local sources the coalition's interventions resulted in the death of some 2,200 civilians, including some 650 children, and artillery attacks destroyed more than 147 civilian vital centres, including hospitals and schools, in addition to the killing of 308 children during the battle of Raqqa by the Allied Forces.

Recommendations

- To end the blockade and to ensure immediate and timely access and delivery of humanitarian assistance to children in all besieged areas.
- The international community should move its mechanisms to end violations by armed groups against civilians, especially children, and to deter states that support armed militias in Syria.
- Holding the Turkish government accountable for war crimes against Syrian children without justification and the need to impose international sanctions on them as a means of exerting pressure to end their military interventions in Syria.
- Review the interventions of the international alliance to ensure that children are not harmed by the implementation of air strikes and assure that their operations are limited to fighting ISIL.
- International intervention is necessary for the protection of refugee or fleeing children to neighbouring States, ensuring that they are not killed or treated inhumanely, and that mechanisms are put in place to prevent their displacement or their deposition from education in host States.